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Letter dated 12 March 2001 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 8 March 2001, which I received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I should be grateful if you would bring it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

01-28377 (E) 120301

Annex

Letter dated 8 March 2001 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to the Secretary-General

Following the fact-finding mission to southern Serbia by my Personal Representative last week, as well as visits of a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) political-military team to Skopje, I wish to inform you of the decisions taken by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) today.

With regard to the situation in southern Serbia, NAC decided on a number of important steps regarding the ground safety zone (GSZ). These steps are to be implemented in the very near future, accompanied by confidence-building measures including a ceasefire agreed between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbian authorities and the ethnic Albanian representatives, and the initiation of direct negotiations between the parties.

In particular, NAC confirmed NATO's intention ultimately to abolish the GSZ, but reaffirmed that the Commander of the Kosovo Force (COMKFOR) should at this stage retain authority over the GSZ and air safety zone (ASZ) under the terms of the Military Technical Agreement. As the first step of the phased and conditioned reduction of the GSZ, the Council authorized COMKFOR to allow the controlled return of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia forces into the GSZ in a small sector along the border of Serbia with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia[a] (Sector C (East)). This step can be taken within the next few days.

NAC also agreed that further controlled return to the GSZ should continue rapidly thereafter in the northern boundary of Kosovo with Serbia proper (Sector A), including the strip of border of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with Albania (Sector C (West)). The part of the GSZ in the municipality of Medveda (Sector D) can be released at the same time as Sector A or later. These steps will be taken subject to COMKFOR's recommendations to be provided to the Council on or around 20 March for approval. Access to Sector B will be authorized by the NAC at a later stage.

The Council will remain seized of the matter, including the consideration of arrangements for support to the European Union Monitoring Mission. I have also asked my Personal Representative, Mr. Feith, to return to the region this weekend to coincide with the immediate next step, which is the agreement of the ceasefire by the parties concerned. For your information, Deputy Prime Minister Covic, in a letter to me, announced that personnel changes will be made in Army of Yugoslavia (VJ) and Ministry of Internal Affairs Special Police (MUP) units which will be allowed access into the GSZ. This should be a good initial confidence-building measure.

With regard to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, NAC, while welcoming the recent measures taken by COMKFOR, tasked our military authorities to identify additional measures to enhance security along the border of the country with Kosovo. We are also considering the findings of the Advisory Mission on Border Security which recently returned from Skopje, as well as further bilateral and multilateral assistance to the government. We will study further ways of showing

[a] Turkey recognizes the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

political support to the government in light of the recommendations by Ambassador Speckhard, the Deputy Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, who has just returned from Skopje.

For your information, NAC will hold a 19+1 meeting with Foreign Minister Kerim on Friday, 9 March, at his request. I expect that this meeting will provide a useful occasion to address the concerns of the authorities and to encourage the continuation of their measured response to the situation at their northern border.

It is clear that we need to maintain close contact between our respective organizations as the situation develops. I look forward to the next Coordination Meeting on the Balkans to take place in Brussels on 22 March under the Chairmanship of Ms. Frechette.

(*Signed*) George **Robertson**